

THE WIRE DEVILS

Granting the presence of the Hawk, is he here as a rival of the criminals of whose existence we are already only too well aware, or is he one of them through old-time associations before Sing Sing put a temporary check upon his activities?"

There was more—a virulent outpouring of wrath at the intolerable extent to which the community, life and property, was being endangered, and a promise of summary vengeance upon the criminals caught.

"Quite so!" murmured the Hawk, lowering his feet slowly to the floor. "I guess it wouldn't be healthy to get caught around these parts. I have feeling that it would be the nearest telegraph pole instead of a trial!"

He tossed the newspaper back on the table. The sounder, spasmodic in its chatter, for the moment was still. All was silence, profound, absolute. Then the clock struck, loud, resonant, smashing through the silence, startling. And at the same instant the sounder broke into a quick tattoo. The Hawk snatched a pencil from his pocket, and jerked his body forward—then relaxed again.

"Stray stuff," he muttered. "Got in ahead of him. We'll get it in a minute now."

Pencil poised in his hand, the flashlight playing on the blank sheet of paper before him, the Hawk waited. The sounder ceased—and almost instantly broke again, rattling sharply through the room. The